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SAIUNKOKU MONOGATARI 23

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第23話

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YES
ARE ALL THE PREPARA-TIONS IN PLACE?

...SOME OF THEM ARE ABSENT THOUGH?
...BUT PLEASE DON'T ASK ME WHY.
...EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE ARRIVED ALREADY
YES, MOST OF THEM HAVE ARRIVED.
THE WEATHER IS GOOD TODAY.

AHAH, THE WEATHER IS GOOD TODAY, KOUYUU
THE SKY WAS ALSO THIS COLOUR WHEN YOU WERE ANNOUNCED AS THE TOP SCHOLAR AT THE BANQUET, WHERE THE WEALTHY AND POWERFUL THEN CHASED YOU SAYING "PLEASE, YOU HAVE TO BE MY SON-IN-LAW".
...HEY!
"FIRST PLACE- JOUIGEN... THE HIGHEST SCORING NATIONAL EXAM CANDIDATE...
SHIT! IF I MAKE A FUSS HERE, I'D SURELY END UP IN A BAD STATE...
YES?
TH-THAT NIGHTMARISH MEMORY IS ONE WHICH I'D DIE TO FORGET
REISHIN -SAMA
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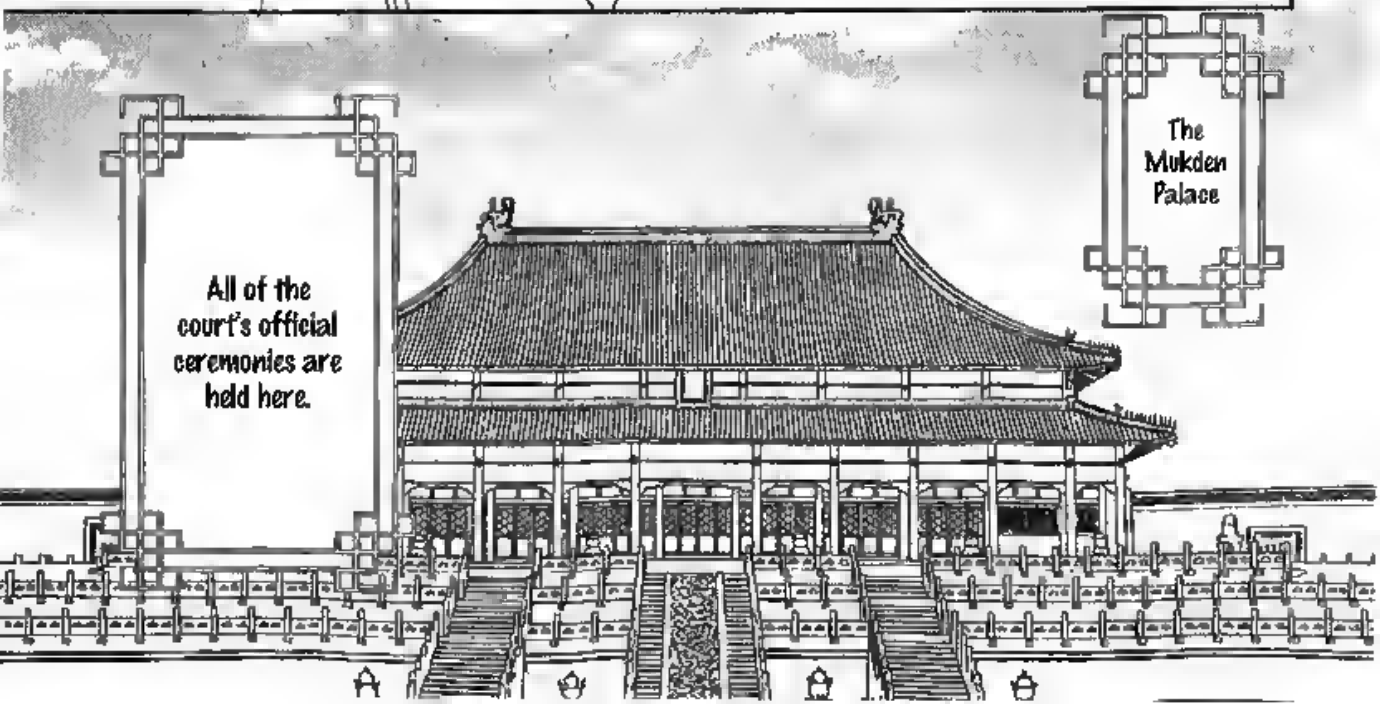
*MINISTER OF CIVIL AFFAIRS .. THE WIELDING HEAD OF MANPOWER

FINALLY THIS DAY HAS ARRIVED..
ENTERS THE PALACE.
MINISTER OF CIVIL AFFAIRS, KOU REISHIN-SAMA AND HIS ASSISTANT MINISTER, RI KOUYUU-SAMA

*MINISTER, ASSISTANT MINISTER .. THE MINISTER IS THE DEPARTMENT'S HEAD, WHILE THE ASSISTANT MINISTER IS HIS ASSISTANT



OF COURSE, THAT'S BECAUSE THE TOP 3 ARE THAT KIND OF PEOPLE---
THERE'S A BIGGER COMMOTION THIS TIME COMPARED TO WHEN ASSISTANT MINISTER RI RECEIVED HIS HONOURS.

I DIDN'T EXPECT HIM TO BREAK RI KOUYUU-SAMA'S RECORD AS THE YOUNGEST JOUGEN EVER.
HE GOT THE POSITION OF JOUGEN AT THE AGE OF 13.

*SCHOLARS...REFERS TO PEOPLE WHO ARE STUDYING TOWARDS BECOMING AN OFFICIAL

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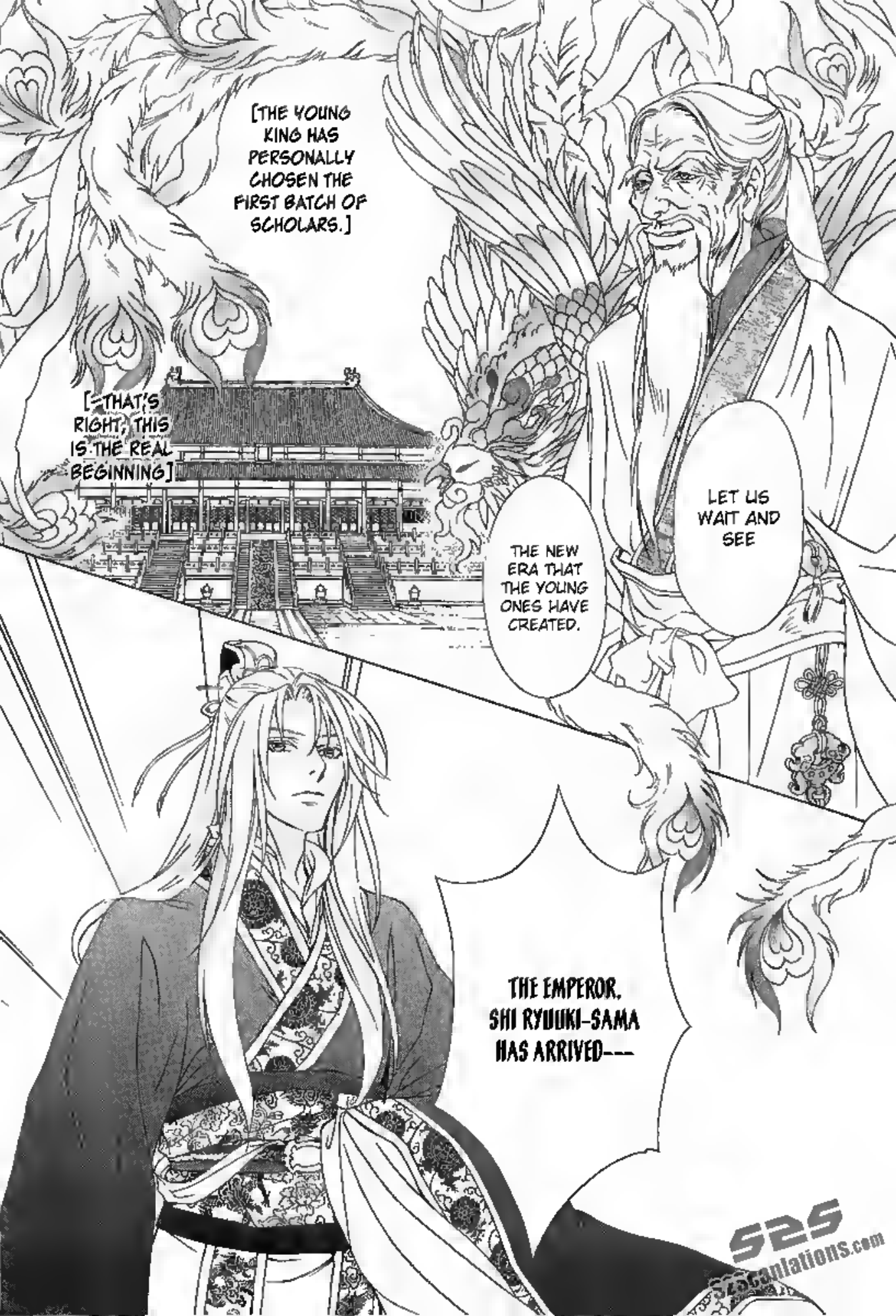
AM I CORRECT, REISHIN?
NOW ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS WAIT FOR THAT YOUNG LADY TO ARRIVE
SHOULD HAVE REALIZED THIS A LONG TIME AGO.
IT WILL BE A LOT TOUGHER FROM NOW ON.
IT IS FINALLY ABOUT TO BEGIN.
"[THE NATIONAL EXAMS WERE NOT HELD LAST YEAR BECAUSE THE LATE EMPEROR PASSED AWAY AND A MOURNING PERIOD HAD TO BE OBSERVED.]
AHH, YOU ARE INDEED CORRECT.


[THE YOUNG KING HAS PERSONALLY CHOSEN THE FIRST BATCH OF SCHOLARS.]
[=THAT'S RIGHT, THIS IS THE REAL BEGINNING]
LET US WAIT AND SEE
THE NEW ERA THAT THE YOUNG ONES HAVE CREATED.
THE EMPEROR, SHI RYUUKI-SAMA HAS ARRIVED---

THIS YEAR'S JOUGEN IS
TO EIGETSU
YES!

EHHH--
ホ～

BOU-GEN---RAN ...RYUREN
-:HE'S NOT HERE?:-
-:HE QUALIFIED AS BOUGEN BUT ACTUALLY MISSED THE CEREMONY?!

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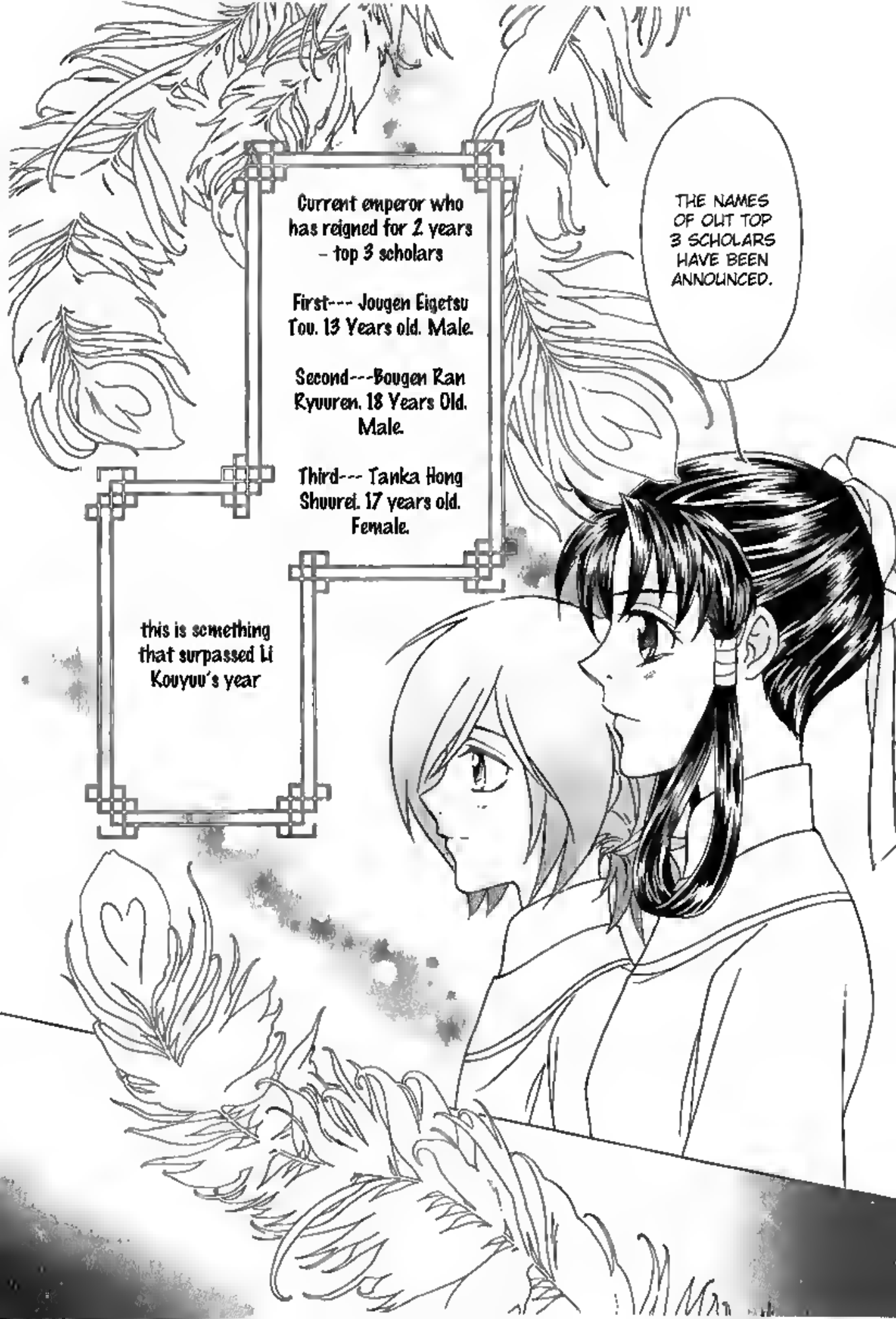
Current emperor who has reigned for 2 years – top 3 scholars
First--- Jougen Eigetsu Tou. 13 Years old. Male.
Second---Bougen Ran Ryuuren. 18 Years Old. Male.
Third--- Tanka Hong Shuurei. 17 years old. Female.
this is something that surpassed Li Kouyuu's year
THE NAMES OF OUT TOP 3 SCHOLARS HAVE BEEN ANNOUNCED.

HAS UNCLE BEEN DOING WELL LATELY?
.....
MA'AM, PLEASE GIVE ME A BAG OF SALT
AHH... SHUU-REI
SORRY... I'M A LITTLE BUSY RIGHT NOW
EHH ...
THIS IS REALLY WEIRD
ARE THEY ALIENATING ME?
EVER SINCE THEY ANNOUNCED THAT I GOT THIRD PLACE IN THE EXAMS, I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO TALK PROPERLY TO ANYONE.
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AND KOU-CHOU-NEE TOO
THE CHILDREN AT SCHOOL
I'M SO SORRY, SHUUREI, BUT COULD YOU NOT COME HERE FOR THE TIME BEING?
SIGH---
WHY DID IT BECOME LIKE THIS?
EIGETSU -KUN?!
SOMEHOW, I FEEL LONELY ---
DAZE,
DAZE...

WHA--?!
STOP RIGHT THERE!
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WHAT?! COME TO MY HOUSE IF YOU WANNA EAT!
Were you trying to eat grass just now?
BUT THAT WOULD CAUSE YOU MORE TROUBLE...
UWAA! YOU'RE~ ~
YES....
YOU'D. BETTER. COME

SORRY~
HOLD ON! EXACTLY HOW LONG HAVE YOU NOT EATEN?
AH! EIGET-SU-KUN!
.....
THIS IS REALLY INFURIATING! WHY DIDN'T YOU COME TO MY HOUSE WHEN YOU REALIZED YOU HAD NO PLACE TO STAY?!
...I DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY. BESI-DES, HOW COULD I BE THAT SPOILT (EVEN THOUGH IT WAS SELF-INFLICTED)

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DOESN'T THE JOUGEN RECEIVE 80 SILVER TAELS AS A REWARD?
I'VE ALREADY SENT IT BACK TO MY HOME-TOWN.
YES
...ALL OF IT?
WAIT A MINUTE! EIGETSU-KUN, DON'T TELL ME YOU SENT THE LETTER ABOUT THE EXAMS TOO?
IT'S BECAUSE THE MINISTRY OF RITES SAID THEY WOULD USE THEIR FASTEST HORSE SO I JUST SENT IT ALONG..
AND REGARDING THE LETTER, I DIDN'T REALLY THINK ABOUT IT.
EIGETSU-KUN, I REALLY DON'T KNOW IF I SHOULD SAY YOU'RE..
EASY OR JUST TOO NAIVE...
EHHH?
The scholars---especially the top 3, will receive a huge amount of money and different types of privileges
For those who harbour bad intentions, the scholars are good prey
OJOU-SAMA, YOU'LL HAVE TO BE CAREFUL TOO
I HOPE YOU WILL AVOID GOING OUT ON YOUR OWN

BUT... LUCKILY, EIGETSU-KUN'S THE JOUGEN
NOTHING BAD WILL HAPPEN IN THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD AGAIN...
I SHOULD SECRETLY WIPE HIM OUT
yes i'll be careful next time.
IT'S GOOD THAT TODAY IS A CALM AND PEACEFUL DAY AGAIN
THE MAN WHO SLIPPED AWAY FROM THE CEREMONY...
I WAS SHOCKED WHEN I SAW HIS NAME ON THE LIST
I'VE MADE MYSELF CLEAR THAT IF HE GETS THE TITLE OF JOUGEN, I'LL GIVE UP ON THE WORLD!!
IN THE DORMS, ALL HE DOES IS WAKE UP TO EAT WHAT OTHERS HAVE COOKED AND THEN GO BACK TO SLEEP!
HE ALWAYS PLAYS THAT NASTY FLUTE!
AND WHY DID HE EVEN RECEIVE THE TILE OF BOUGEN!? WHY!!

*PREPARATION DORMS ... THE NATIONAL EXAMS IS THE FINAL <TEST> DURING THE PERIOD OF ~7 DAYS~, EXAMINEES ARE REQUIRED TO STAY AT THE DORMS.

IT IS THE DUTY OF HIGH-CLASS PEOPLE TO PASS DOWN THEIR STYLE TO REGULAR FOLK
WHEN EVERYONE'S DOING THEIR BEST AND TRYING TO STUDY HARD
WHEN I ASKED HIM WHETHER HE WAS AN IDIOT, HE SAID THAT
ALL THESE IRRESPONSIBLE OPINIONS
WHY IS THAT MAN LIVING IN THE ROOM NEXT TO ME?
INCREDIBLE... IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, SHE KNEADED THE DOUGH INTO A TEXTURE THAT EVEN CHEFS WOULD BE IMPRESSED WITH
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EVEN I HAVE BEEN HARMED BY HIM, I HAVE TO BE MONITORED AND REPRIMANDED
AT LAST I STILL GOT KICKED OUT
AND IT'S ALL THANKS TO HIM...
SHUU-REI-NEE'S ROOM IS BETWEEN MY AND RYUU-REN'S ROOM
MAYBE THAT'S THE REASON WHY WE'RE ALWAYS TOGETHER
...ABOUT THAT, HE'S ACTUALLY AN INCREDIBLE PERSON
IN TERMS OF LOOKS AND MENTALITY

YOU COULD BE MY EXCLUSIVE CHEF WHEN YOU NOBODY WANTS TO MARRY YOU
PUTTING ASIDE HIS NORMAL AND POOR LOOKS AND HIS REFUSAL TO GIVE ANY DOWRY
---WHEN I SEE HIM SAYING THAT IN A STRAI-GHT-FACED MANNER, I REALLY FEEL LIKE ADDING POISON MUS-HROOMS IN THAT POT
SEEING THAT HE'S GENERAL RAN'S BRO-THER SO I TRIED NOT TO HARM HIM!
はう
...THEN YOU HAVE MY THANKS
COUGH
ALTHOUGH THIS IS MY BROTHER I STILL FIND THIS NEWS PAIN TO MY EARS.
.....

UWAAA--
--
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EIGET-SU-KUN, EAT MORE
YES!
IT LOOKS SO DELI-CIOUS~~
じゅ
SFX: TOUCHED
He actually slipped away that's news I didn't hear
GEEZ WHAT'S YOUR BROTHER THINKING
NO WONDER HE'S WORTHY OF BEING GENERAL RAN'S BROTHER
...ABOUT THAT I'M ALSO UNABLE TO PREDICT HIS ACTIONS
BUT IT SEEMS LIKE MY BRO-THERS FORCED HIM TO TAKE THE NATIO-NAL EXAMS

SFX:SHOCK
AND THAT'S HIS SO-CALLED GIVE-IT-ALL?
BUT ONE OF HIS PET PHRASES IS THAT IF YOU WANT TO DO IT, YOU HAVE TO GIVE IT THE BEST
ALTHOUGH I FEEL THAT SOMEDAY HE'LL SNEAK AWAY.... BUT THIS IS TOO FAST
THEN DON'T GET THE TOP 3 POSI-TIONS!
It adds to my troubles
YOU BRO-THERS ARE THE SAME
IT'S SUCH A SHAME THOUGH, I ORIGINALLY THOU-GHT THAT AFTER A LAPSE OF MANY YEARS I WOULD BE ABLE TO SEE SOMEONE FROM THE RAN HOUSE AGAIN BEING A COURT OFFICIAL
AND IT IS RUMOURED THAT THE RAN HOUSE COULD JUDGE HOW MUCH THE NEXT GENERA-TION EMPEROR IS GOING TO WORTH
When the late emperor is still reigning, the Ran house brought away a group of court officials from the court
The rich and power-ful Ran house which surpasses the Hong house
Whether a Ran house member exists in the central politics is no small matter

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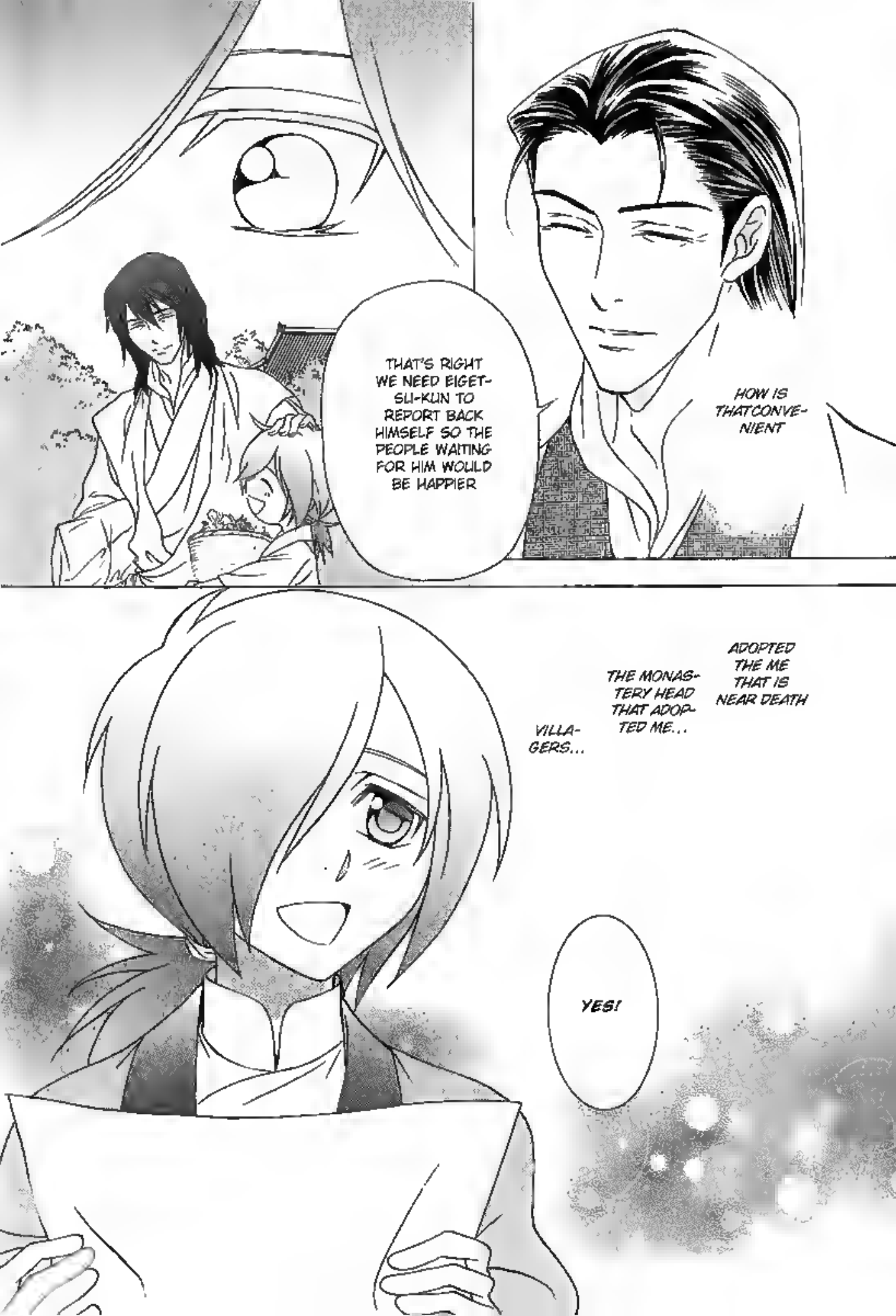
藍楸瑛十八歲
BUT TO THINK THAT AFTER A FEW YEARS YOU CHANGED TO BEING A SOLDIER
SO THE NATION WAS TEMPORARY SPREADING NEWS LIKE WILDFIRE AND THERE WAS CHAOS ABOUT WHETHER THE RAN HOUSE PLANS TO INTERFERE WITH THE NATION'S STRIVE BETWEEN THE NATION AND THE EMPEROR
SO WHEN 7 YEARS AGO SHUEI-SAMA'S NAME WAS AT THE BOARD ON THE TOP SECOND SCHOLAR
I DIDN'T IMAGINE A 13 YEAR OLD KID WOULD EASILY OBTAIN THE TOP SCHOLAR POSITION AND BREAK KOUYUU'S RECORD
SPEAKING OF PEOPLE PREVIOUSLY UNHEARD OF, COMPARED TO ME, IT SHOULD BE EIGETSU-KUN?
WHAT EXACTLY IS THE RAN HOUSE THINKING?
AND THEN THEY SENT ANOTHER ONE OF THEIR PURE-BLOODED MALE
TRUE, EVEN IF THERE ISN'T A LIMIT FOR RESTRICTING AGE BUT IT'S STILL...
AND HE DOESN'T HAVE THE ROYALTY TO BACK HIM UP
SFX: BLUSH

BUT...
NO BUTS EVEN IF IT'S BECAUSE OF THE SAFETY OF YOUR MONEY
YOU'D BETTER HURRY TO WRITE A LETTER
MONEY?
THAT'S RIGHT YOU'RE INCREDIBLE BUT YOU DIDN'T REPORT IT BACK TO YOUR HOME TOWN
FOR YOU

EH---!?
EVEN IF YOU FEEL THAT ON A HYPOTHETICAL SITUATION IF YOU STEAL SOMEONE'S MONEY AND FEEL THAT IT'S TOO LESS, YOU ALSO MUST SEND THE MONEY BACK IN PARTS
THAT'S RIGHT EVEN IF IT'S USING MINISTRY OF RITE'S FASTEST HORSES BUT AFTER THE LETTER GOES THROUGH MANY HANDS AT LEAST THEY'LL RECEIVE HALF OF IT

SHUU-REI-NEE ...
ALRIGHT WRITE THE LETTER FASTER TO YOUR HOME TO CONFIRM TO THEM THAT IT'S YOU AND CONVENIENTLY TELL THEM YOU'RE THE TOP SCHOLAR


THAT'S RIGHT WE NEED EIGETSU-KUN TO REPORT BACK HIMSELF SO THE PEOPLE WAITING FOR HIM WOULD BE HAPPIER
HOW IS THAT CONVENIENT
ADOPTED THE ME THAT IS NEAR DEATH
THE MONASTERY HEAD THAT ADOPTED ME...
VILLAGERS...
YES!